

***Resolution
of the
Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives***

WHEREAS, Grand Canyon National Park is an iconic landscape recognized around the world, receiving more than 5 million visitors annually; and

WHEREAS, the Grand Canyon was designated a Forest Reserve in 1893, a National Monument in 1908, a National Park in 1919, and a World Heritage Site in 1979; and

WHEREAS, management of federal land in or near Grand Canyon National Park has direct impacts on sensitive habitat, listed and endangered species, groundwater, air quality, archeological resources, recreational opportunities, and the health and safety of visitors and residents near the Park; and

WHEREAS, the Colorado River and its tributaries have supported civilizations from the ancient pueblos of the Colorado Plateau to our modern cities of Tucson, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Los Angeles and San Diego; and

WHEREAS, water is scarce and the soils and rocks of this region are porous making the leaching of toxins into the soil and water a grave threat to this critical water source of the West; and

WHEREAS, the National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.) requires that the resources of the Grand Canyon be left unimpaired for future generations, and

WHEREAS, the Grand Canyon is an unparalleled, sacred landscape to generations of Native Americans whose traditions and stories are landmarked by places such as Red Butte, Cataract Canyon, Kanab Creek, and the Kaibab Plateau; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service recently approved exploratory drilling for uranium at seven sites within three miles of Grand Canyon National Park, and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service approved exploratory drilling for uranium near the park using a categorical exclusion from the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et. seq.) meaning that other federal land management agencies, the Congress and the public were provided little or no information about, or opportunity to participate in, the decision; and

WHEREAS, international demand for uranium continues to escalate dramatically, with the price per pound increasing tenfold in the last five years; and

WHEREAS, there are more than 1,100 uranium mining claims within five miles of the Grand Canyon; and

WHEREAS, when mined, uranium is radioactive; producing radium, thorium and radon gas; and

WHEREAS, exposure to these elements is known to cause cancer of the lungs and bones, kidney damage and birth defects in humans; and

WHEREAS, previous uranium mining operations near Grand Canyon National Park have left a legacy of debilitating illness and death among Native Peoples in the area; and

WHEREAS, previous uranium mining operations resulted in contaminated soil and ground water which remain unremediated; and

WHEREAS, unlike other fuel minerals, uranium mining continues to be governed by the antiquated Mining Law of 1872 which provides no adequate environmental or human health and safety protections.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that an emergency situation exists regarding uranium mining near Grand Canyon National Park and extraordinary measures must be taken to preserve values that would otherwise be lost;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chair of the Committee is authorized and directed to notify the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture on its behalf, that the Committee finds that an emergency situation exists regarding uranium mining near Grand Canyon National Park and pursuant to section 204(e) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1714(e)) and 43 CFR 2310.5, the Secretary of the Interior shall, subject to valid existing rights, immediately withdraw the approximately 1,068,908 acres of Federal land generally depicted on the map entitled "Grand Canyon Watersheds Protection Act of 2008," dated May 28, 2008, and accompanying this Resolution from all forms of location and entry under the United States mining laws (30 U.S.C. 22 et seq.) for a period not to exceed three years.

NICK J. RAHALL, II
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives

Approved _____, 2008